



UNIVERSITY
ARCHIVES

THE

Gateway

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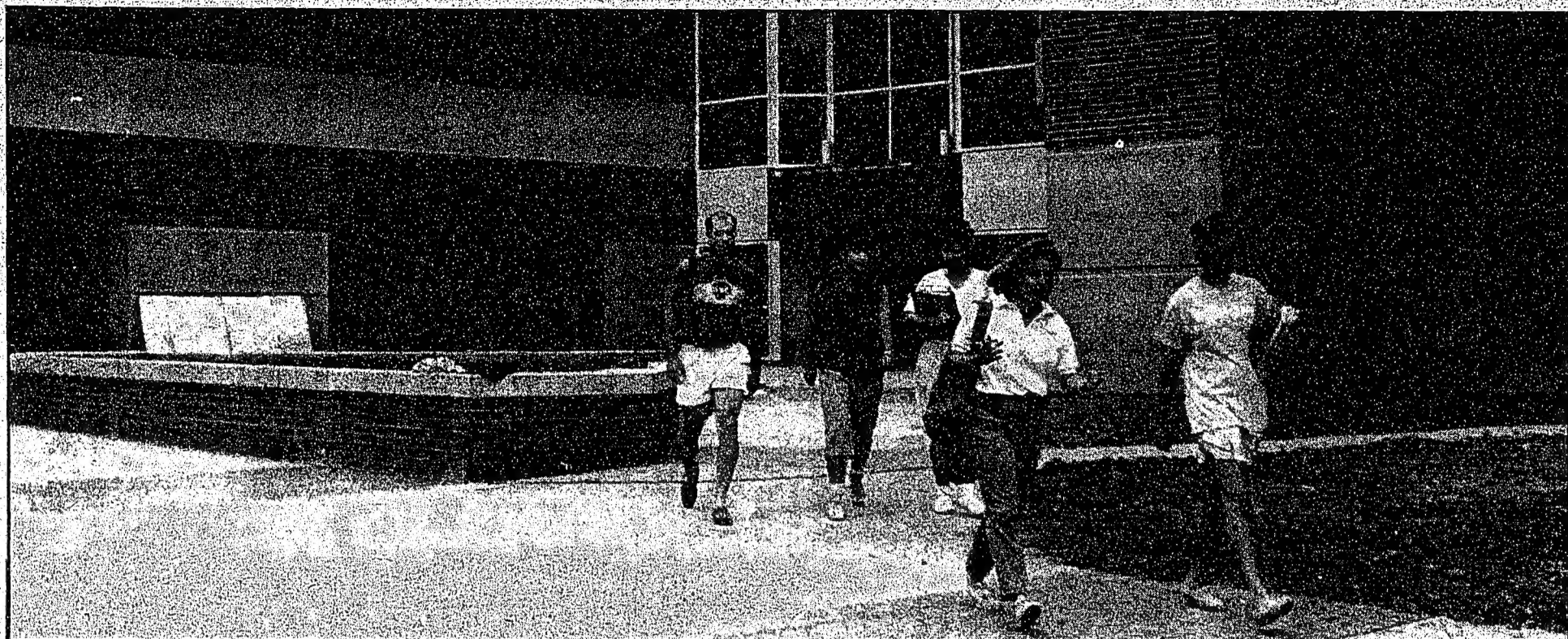


Photo by Akitoshi Kizaki

In the beginning . . .

The west wing of UNO's new Lab Sciences Building opened Monday as students returned for summer classes. The math, computer science and chemistry departments are moving to the new building. The rest of the building is scheduled to be completed in time for fall classes.

Student Senate CAO accused of 'neglecting duties'

By TIM McMAHAN
Senior Reporter

Joe Kerrigan, chief administrative officer of the Student Senate, was censured in a resolution passed at the May 21 meeting of the senate.

The resolution stemmed from charges of oversights brought against Kerrigan through the Oversight Committee in April.

Among the charges were that Kerrigan ne-

glected arranging inter-agency council meetings, did not write a job description for the director of the Disabled Students Agency (DSA), forgot to reappoint justices of the Student Court and did not allocate the use of two Booster Books to people outside the university system. Booster Books contain promotional materials, including tickets to athletic events at UNO.

Kerrigan said the failure to reappoint court justices was due to him following past proce-

dures and waiting for notice from a committee chairperson or from the chief justice regarding the need for reappointments. Since this procedure was first used in 1985, some committees have been discontinued, including the Campus Security Advisory Committee and the Health Advisory Committee, according to Oversight Committee notes.

The Booster Books had been purchased but were never received, Kerrigan said. Attempts have been made to track down the books, but their whereabouts are still unknown, he said. "The likelihood is they won't show up," Kerrigan said.

According to Oversight Committee notes, agency directors were asked to write job descriptions for themselves. Byron Exley, director of DSA, refused and instead submitted a list of jobs he did as director and requested that CAO Kerrigan write the job description. The list was misplaced and no job description for the director of the DSA is on file.

Interagency meetings slowed due to an apparent lack of interest by the directors. "He

(Joe) was under the impression that the directors were too busy and that the meetings weren't helpful," said Cheryl Carter, head of the Oversight Committee.

In addition to the censure, Kerrigan received a vote of confidence from the senators.

"The charges don't have that great a bearing, or I wouldn't have got a vote of confidence," Kerrigan said. He said he made changes in procedure when the charges first came to light, among them, setting up a calendar of appointments required of the CAO.

In addition, some of the problems stemmed from outdated by-laws which are scheduled to be revised in the near future, Kerrigan said.

Kerrigan said he plans to submit a letter of resignation to the speaker of the senate this week and that he's planning on running for Student President/Regent next fall. The resignation will come prior to the choosing of a new election commission, a responsibility of the CAO.

Job Match Project shown to elderly, handicapped workers

by JOSEPH HALL
Contributing Writer

Nebraska Governor Kay Orr declared June "Workers with special Needs Awareness Month" at a luncheon June 5 marking the completion of the UNO Job Match Project.

The project, a multi-media package designed to dispel stereotypes about disabled and older job seekers, is "an excellent first step to get employers to look at disabled job seekers not as handicapped, but as workers with special talents," Orr said.

The package includes printed materials, audio cassettes and a 20-minute video tape, which was premiered at the luncheon. The video tape depicts elderly and disabled workers in a variety of settings.

The package was developed by the UNO College of Public Affairs and Community Service with a \$183,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration on Developmental Disabilities.

Keynote speaker at the luncheon Robert Stovenour, acting commissioner of the admin-

istration, said that the UNO Job Match Project will help the Reagan Administration meet its 1987 target of 75,000 new job placements for disabled and older job seekers.

Five copies of the multi-media package will remain at UNO and may be borrowed by prospective employers and employment agencies for a \$150 deposit, said Floyd Waterman, a professor in the UNO Center for Applied Urban Research. The master of the video tape and other materials were given to HHS, which will make at least 100 copies and distribute them to state agencies nationwide, Waterman said.

The UNO Job Match Project illustrates that disabled and older job seekers "made good, reliable and dedicated employees who are happy to have the opportunity to work and contribute to their own self development and businesses for which they work," Stovenour said.

In addition to Orr and Stovenour, other Nebraska public servants attending the luncheon included U.S. Congressman Hal Daub, Omaha City Councilman Fred Conley and UNO Chancellor Del Weber.

AIDS workshop tomorrow

A free workshop focusing on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) will be held tomorrow, June 13, from 8:45 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

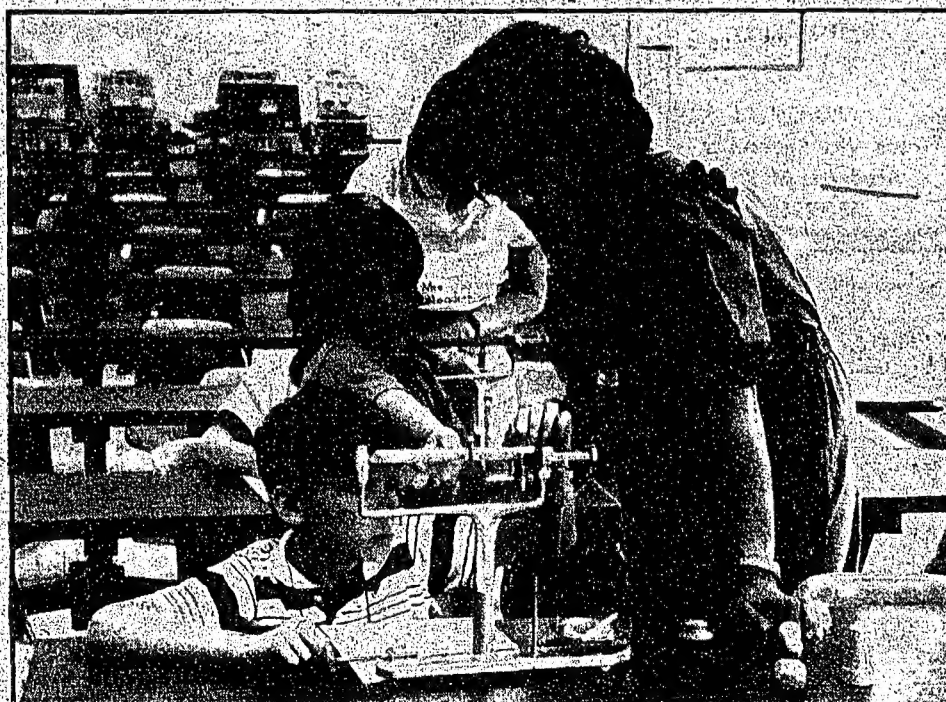
The workshop will feature video tapes provided by the American Red Cross, a question and answer session and a panel discussion.

The panel members will be Brian James, Nebraska AIDS program coordinator; Elaine Blair, Douglas County Health Department's supervisor of health education; and Mike Fitz-

patrick, a Family Service marriage and family therapist. Each panelist will present information from his specific professional field.

The workshop is open to anyone who is interested, but reservations should be made in advance. Anonymous reservations will be accepted, and participants will be asked to complete questionnaires which will become part of a study of AIDS awareness.

Reservations may be made by calling 554-2792 or 554-2374.



Future Einsteins

Karen Hjerpestedt (right) assists elementary math students in the gifted program in Allwine Hall. The program, which enrolls elementary and junior high age students, is offered through the College of Education.

Comment

'New guy' steps in

Gateway starts fresh, forget 'Mitch' and Prescher

What you are now holding in your hands is the first issue of the Gateway for this summer. It is a completely different newspaper from last semester's with a new editorial staff, some new reporters and four new columnists, myself included.

Try to look at the paper as a new born babe, all naked and innocent with no past, whether it be bright or gloomy, overshadowing it. The reason I say that is because it seems that last year's Gateway is known for only two things by many of the students I've talked to.

I was reminded of these two things repeatedly while doing the Viewfinder. You remember the Viewfinder. Every week I used to go out and ask five people for their opinions on a current events topic and take a mug-shot of them. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say I asked around ten people, got five responses and an embarrassing shunning from the rest. I would end the mini interview by casually asking what the person felt about the current Gateway, its problems and its good points.

Two things stood out. First, the dreaded Big Max on Campus comic strip where Max's new friend Mitch pointed toward his crotch area and said, "Feel this," "Jerk this" and "Strangle this." It became apparent by the number of angry letters the editor, Mark Elliott, received that Mitch wasn't pointing at his shoes.

Mark wasn't the only one who got angry comments.

Once, while in the midst of acquiring people for the Viewfinder, I decided, on a whim, to ask a girl from one of the sororities to comment on that week's question. I strolled into

the Donut Hole and spied a large table filled with young women wearing sweatshirts with big letters emblazoned across their chests.

"Say, I'm from the Gateway, and I was wondering if one of you would be interested in being in the Viewfinder. This week's question is, 'What do you think of...'"

That's as far as I got before these kind-looking ladies began pelting little ol' me with a line of Gateway insults, basically telling me what they thought the Gateway should be used for and where I should stick any future Big Max on Campus strips.

I left before they started throwing food at me.

That one comic strip caused a lot of general turmoil for Mr. Elliott and eventually ended up getting him a verbal spanking from the Publications Committee, a group which oversees complaints about the Gateway's content.

As a sidebar to that little story, Mark is now working as a full-time intern at the Bellevue Leader. He told me he probably wouldn't be gracing these pages much this summer, but look for him next fall.

Tim McMahan

Gateway Columnist

As for Bob Atherton, the culprit who thought up the little demon strip, you'll see his work in here periodically.

That's one thing Gateway readers said stood out. The other thing isn't really a thing, but a person.

Dan Prescher, the columnist last fall with the cool photo of his Rayban-covered face sporting a "let's party" grin, is now sort of a local celebrity. Last spring I was constantly asked, "What ever happened to that guy who wrote about spitting in the HPER Center? Why don't you guys get him to write more?" Well, the obvious answer was that Prescher had graduated the previous semester and is now working for Omaha's premier entertainment weekly, The Metropolitan, as a contributing writer.

Which brings us back to the subject at hand. Like it or not, I'm here every week. Me. The new guy. Not Dan Prescher. Prescher's done with the college scene. He's busy with the Linoma Mashers and making commercials for a local car dealer. I hope in the coming weeks you'll read my stuff and tell me if what I'm writing is the highest form of grand narrative or insignificant, mindless horse poop. For, you see, I like criticism whether it be food pelting or Prescher-esque glorification.

'Cause in the end, I'm just your poorly paid, ten-dollar-a-column servant. The best I can hope for is that someone reads my work and thinks about what I wrote the next day and the next day and the next. The worst I can foresee is to not be read at all.

Next week: The Real Thing.

Columnist gets charge from televised hotel bill

I have just traveled to 18 cities in a row, and I think you and I know each other well enough that you will not be entirely surprised if I offer you a hotel-room story.

I checked into the Omni International Hotel in Detroit, and when I got to my room I switched on the television set. This was one of those TV sets that offered both free programming and pay-per-view movies.

But a notice on top of the set said there was another feature. If you punched "88" on the little box that was attached to the TV, your

hotel bill — up-to-the-minute — would flash onto the screen.

I had never heard of this before. So naturally I punched "88."

Within seconds, on the TV screen, the words, "Bob Greene" appeared. My room-charge for the first night was listed beneath my name.

Some instructions appeared on the screen. The instructions said that if I noticed anything wrong with the items charged to me, I should phone the front desk. The instructions also said

Bob Greene

Chicago Tribune

that if I wished to check out of the hotel, all I had to do was hit another code number on the magic box. The hotel bill would automatically be charged to the credit card I had submitted for imprint upon checking in.

This was something. This was great. I ordered a room-service dinner, and as soon as the waiter had left the room I punched "88" again. The dinner charge already was displayed on the TV screen.

I was becoming excited by all this. I have stayed in so many hotel rooms, but never have I been able to watch my bill on TV. I considered it entertainment programming. I went to the telephone beside the bed, called my friend Paul Galloway in Chicago and chatted for a few minutes. Galloway must have wondered what I wanted; I didn't have much to say.

But the purpose of my call was simple. I wanted to see it on TV. So as soon as I had said goodbye to Galloway, I sprinted over to

the set, punched "88" — and there was the charge for the long-distance call.

I couldn't stop myself. I wasn't all that hungry or thirsty, having just completed dinner, but I called room service again and asked for a glass of orange juice. The orange juice arrived, I gulped it down — and then I hit "88." The orange juice charge was on the screen.

I went to bed with the idea that this was going to change hotel protocol forever. I woke up in the middle of the night; I hit "88." There was my bill, this time with no additional charges. But it was nice to see it on the screen anyway.

I left the hotel in the morning, but I found myself thinking about this new phenomenon. I called the general manager of the Omni International, Wilbur Williams, and I asked him how this modern miracle had come to be.

"It's a service of Spectradyne, the company that provides the in-room movies," he said. "We've been featuring it since about the first of the year. People love it, especially business travelers. I would estimate that 65 percent of our business clients use it to check out of the hotel."

"Business travelers hate standing in

See Greene

(continued on page 3)

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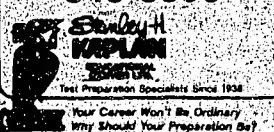
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The Gateway

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News Editor Cheryl Lorraine
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Photo Editor Akito Kizaki
Senior Reporters Mark Elliott
Tim McMahan
Advertising Manager Helene Quigley
Publication Manager Rosalie Melches

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Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the UNO students, faculty, or staff, or those of the NU central administration and Board of Regents.

Letters to the editor must be signed, but those with noms de plume may be accepted. All letters should include appropriate identification, address, and telephone number. (Address and telephone number will not be published.) Letters critical of individuals must be signed by using the first and last name, or initials and last name. Preference is given to typed letters. All correspondence is subject to editing and available space.

Letters exceeding two (2) typewritten pages will be considered editorial commentary and are subject to the above criteria.

Inquiries or complaints should be directed to the editor; advertising inquiries should be directed to the advertising manager. Copies of the Student Publications Committee inquiry policy are available at The Gateway office.

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'Hotel rooms are never going to be the same again'

Greene
(continued from page 2)

checkout lines. They don't much like waiting in line to check in, either, but it's the checkout lines that really bother them. When they want to leave, they want to get out right now — and standing in a long line waiting for a cashier drives them crazy.

"Now they can get up in the morning, take a shower, get dressed and punch up their bill on their TV screen. If they see a charge they don't understand, they can call downstairs and get it straightened out. If the bill looks all right

to them, they can punch the appropriate code number, and they're checked out. They don't have to stop at the front desk."

I asked him if there was a star factor involved — did people like seeing their names and their charges on a TV screen?

"As a matter of fact, they do," Williams said. "Realistically, it's no different from seeing their name on a bill printed on a piece of paper. But there's something about television — people really get a kick out of seeing their name on the screen in their hotel room. It's like they

have their own channel."

Williams said his hotel's cashiers love the new system, too. "It relieves the burden on them," he said. "We've all seen it — there's a long line of people waiting to check out in the morning, and the guy at the front of the line has a dispute about an item on his bill, and the cashier has to go find documentation for the charge, meanwhile everyone else in line is getting high blood pressure. That's stressful for a cashier, and our cashiers are delighted that people are checking out via the television sets in their rooms."

It so happened that I was calling Williams from another hotel room in another city. When I hung up I walked over to the TV set to see what it offered. Just TV shows and movies.

I tried anyway. I punched all the buttons I could. But my name didn't appear on the screen, and my bill didn't appear on the screen.

I felt let down. Somehow, hotel rooms are never going to be the same for me again.

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Viewfinder

Opinions solicited by Joseph Hall

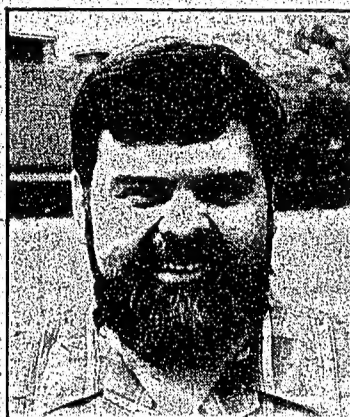
Q: Should UNO faculty salaries be raised, lowered or kept at present levels?



Lori Hill, senior
College of Arts and Sciences
"UNO faculty salaries should probably be kept the same in view of the amount of budget cuts the university is making in other areas."



Dick Edgerton, senior
College of Engineering
"Salaries should be raised because teachers are never paid enough."



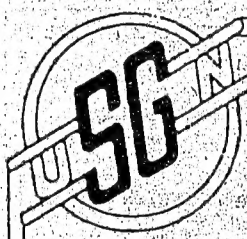
Dr. William O'Dell,
biology professor
College of Arts and Sciences
"Salaries should be raised to keep and attract better quality faculty members."



Eddie Lake, senior
College of Business Administration
"UNO faculty salaries should be raised because salaries at comparable universities are higher, and we have a pretty high quality faculty here at UNO."



Chris Schunk, freshman
College of Arts and Sciences
"Faculty members should be evaluated individually and paid whatever each is worth."



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News Briefs

Regents' activities

At the May 8 meeting of the Board of Regents, Nancy Hoch proposed that the body "at least consider" an increase in faculty salaries beyond the 3 percent raise approved in the 1987-88 budget. Noting a 5 percent increase approved for Kearney State College by its Board of Governors, Hoch suggested that the regents look at other funds beyond what is allocated by the Legislature.

"This is a good budget," said N.U. President Ronald Roskens, "compared to what we expected and the economic conditions of the time." But the salary issue "still hurts," and legislative efforts toward salary increases for faculty beyond 1988 have already been started, he said.

The regents also considered a 2 percent across-the-board increase in tuition for all N.U. students. If approved, undergraduate resident students at UNO will pay \$42.75 per credit hour, and nonresidents \$115.50. Graduate residents would pay \$53.00, nonresidents \$125.75.

The regents will vote on the tuition increase at their next open meeting, June 20.

Faculty Senate

At the May 13 meeting of the UNO Faculty Senate, a resolution was passed urging the vice chancellor of academic affairs to "revise the workload policy to accommodate service (by faculty members), especially at the college and university levels." The resolution noted that service, which includes participation on various formal and informal committees and the senate, is "time-consuming and essential to the proper functioning and well-being of the university."

At the same meeting, members of the senate's executive committee for the 1987-88 school year were elected. They are:

Kermit Peters (Fine Arts), president; Eric Manley (Arts and Sciences), vice president; John Reidelback (university library), secretary/treasurer; Orville Menard (Arts and Sciences), chairman of the cabinet; and Michael Stewart (College of Education), chairman of the Rules Committee.

UNO graduation

At UNO graduation ceremonies May 9, a record 596 graduates participated in the ceremony, which featured speaker William R. Nestor, president of Kearney State College. Also, three graduates were recognized for having a grade point average of 4.0. They were Mary Melonis-Hayden and Michelle McMurphy, College of Education; and Karen Bexton, College of Engineering and Technology.

Microcomputer classes

Several Microcomputer training classes began this week at the Peter Kiewit Conference Center, and various week-day and Saturday sessions will continue throughout the summer. Programs covered include Lotus 1.2.3/Level 1 and HAL, Word Perfect and dBase III Plus in separate sessions, as well as sessions focusing on an introduction to personal computing and problem solving and others. Prices range from \$125 to \$235 and include tuition, reference notebooks and parking. For more information, call JoAnn Lewis at 554-8385.

Regents' Tuition Waiver

The deadline for Regents' Tuition Waiver applications for fall 1987 is July 13, 1987. Applications may be picked up in the Graduate Studies Office, Eppley 204. Students must have a current 1987-88 Financial Aid Form (FAF) on file with the Financial Aid Office in order to be eligible.

Bulk of summer students prefer first day session

By JILL CARSTENS
Contributing Writer

Although the total student enrollment at UNO during the summer is considerably smaller than during the regular school year, the average age of students who attend is about the same, said William Gerbracht, UNO registrar.

The average age of students during both summer sessions and the fall semester of 1986 and spring semester 1987 was 26 years old, he said.

Many elementary and secondary school teachers enroll in summer classes, he said, as many are working towards renewing their teaching certificates or pursuing advanced degrees. About 1,500 of the total summer enrollment are teachers, he said.

However, according to the Preliminary Registration Report from the summer of 1986, more students from the sophomore, junior and senior classes enrolled in the College of Business Administration than any other college. The College of Arts and Sciences enrolled the majority of freshmen.

"There has been a steady increase in the number of students taking night classes," Gerbracht said. Since the College of Business Administration expanded its program to include more evening courses, it also draws many students pursuing graduate degrees, he said.

The largest summer session is the first day session, probably because more courses are offered than during the second day session and the evening sessions, and because late summer is more of a vacation time, Gerbracht said. Of the 6,957 students enrolled last summer, 4,171 attended day courses only.

Undergraduate students make up a large majority of the total enrolled, the report stated, while 1,365 students were enrolled in the graduate college. Summer sessions attract between 5,700 and 7,000 each year and, while figures on this summer's enrollment will not be available until after the second day session starts July 13, these figures are usually consistent, Gerbracht said.

Other figures from last summer's report:-

Part-time students composed over half of the total enrolled, while 3,178 students enrolled full time.

Nebraska resident students were the vast majority with 6,666 enrolled, while non-resident students numbered only 291.

Last year's total summer enrollment included 3,985 female students, while 2,972 were male.

Big Max On Campus



The Gateway: A little stab of happiness



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Profile

From Spanish Harlem to 3rd ranked law school

UNO graduate realizes dream, leaves for Stanford

By SHERI NIKUNEN
Staff Reporter

Richard "Rico" Perez graduated summa cum laude this spring from UNO with an undergraduate degree in political science, and leaves August 18th to begin his studies at Stanford Law School in California where he hopes to earn not only his juris doctorate degree, but also a master's degree in political science.

Stanford's law school is ranked third in the nation, according to the Law School Admissions Services/Council who are responsible for preparing the admissions test for law school applicants, the LSAT. The first and second ranked in the nation are Harvard and Yale, respectively.

For Perez, this is a dream come true.

"Only 171 applicants are accepted each year, and I keep thinking that when I get there they're going to tell me, 'Wait, we got the wrong Rico Perez. We meant the other one,'" he said.

Considering the road Perez has traveled to reach this goal, it is not surprising he feels this way. Perez is originally from Puerto Rico. Perez' mother and father left their home to come to America and "seek their fortune," he said. They landed in

"Only 171 applicants are accepted each year, and I keep thinking that when I get there they're going to tell me, 'Wait, we got the wrong Rico Perez.'"

—Richard Perez

New York when Perez was five years old and shortly after, his father left and went back to Puerto Rico, leaving his mother alone to raise two boys in New York City.

Perez grew up in Spanish Harlem and attended private Catholic schools for his education. After graduating, he spent most of his time counseling heroin addicts, many of whom were his friends. He also held a full-time job as a collection agent.

Perez said he knew he had to do something to get away from this environment in order to make something of his life.

"All my friends were big talkers, dreamers. Never any ac-

tion. I go back there today to visit my mother, and they're still talking about the same things and doing the same things," he said.

During this time, tragedy struck his family. Doctors discovered his mother had cancer.

She had tumors all over her torso, he said, and had to be operated on immediately. The doctors removed her tumors along with internal organs that were cancerous and gave her five years to live.

That was in 1971. In May, she flew in from New York to attend Perez' commencement exercises.

"My mother is a fighter," Perez said. "She raised my brother and me alone in New York and lived with excruciating pain caused by the cancer for 15 years, and she never gave up."

During this time, Perez worked two full-time jobs to help pay the hospital bills.

At 22 years of age, Perez decided to join the U.S. Air Force. Perez said he knew the Air Force would enable him to receive financial help for college. All along his dream of going to law school and becoming an attorney persisted.

After eight and a half years of active duty and tours that took him all over the United States, to England, where he met his wife, and to Spain, he landed at Offutt Air Force Base.

Here he finished his time in the military and began his full-time studies at UNO.

Now Perez' dream is a reality. He and his wife will be leaving in August to get settled in California, where she will help support them while he pursues his studies.

When Perez is done with law school, he said he would like to go back to New York and try to help those who are in the same position he was in when he and his family first moved there.

"There are many people in New York who are taken advantage of," Perez said, "and it is not because they're stupid, but because they're ignorant of the law. Many people don't speak English well enough to read the contracts they sign, and they don't understand things like interest. They end up paying twice as much for something, such as furniture," he said. "These are the people I want to help. But my future may lie elsewhere, it really depends on where I get a job. Anything that can happen, happens in New York. It is very internationally oriented and holds many opportunities."

Perez applied at seven different schools and was accepted at six of those seven. He received letters of recommendation

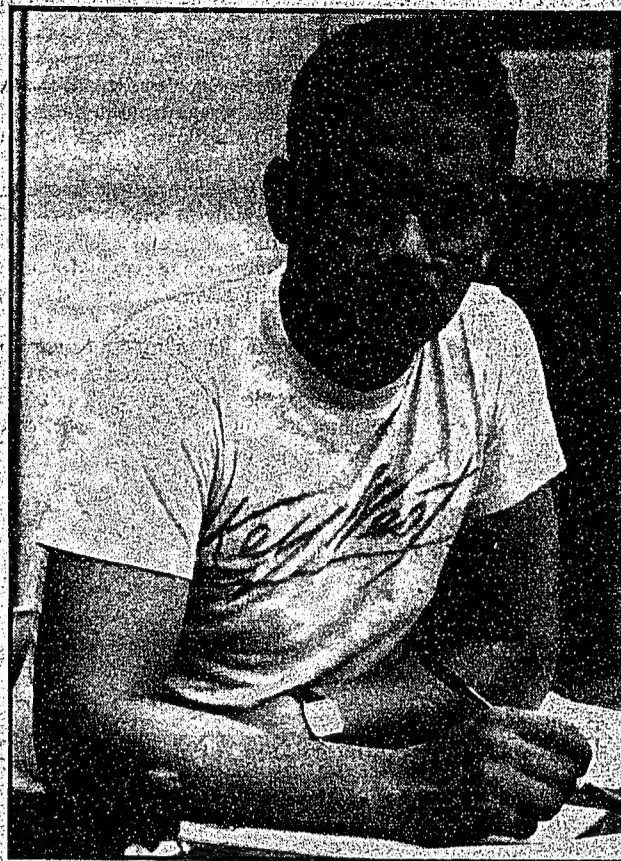
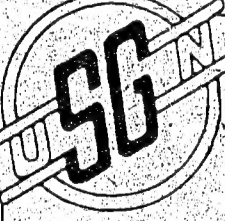


Photo by Akitoshi Kizaki

Perez

from both Dr. Walter Bacon and Dr. Kent Kirwan, professors at UNO who have guided him in his endeavors. Perez chose Stanford primarily because of its reputation, but also because of the Hoover Institute, which is a part of Stanford that centers around studies in political science.


Perez is a member of Pi Gamma Mu, an honorary organization for students with a political science major, and he also works part-time at the UNO library.



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UNO students to study in Japan

By SUE PERRY
Contributing Writer

Two UNO students will get a taste of Oriental culture when they visit Japan this summer.

Both Terri Bates, a senior majoring in marketing, and Della Dargantes, a sophomore majoring in pre-physical therapy, will travel to Japan for summer study tours.

Bates' three-week tour, which is sponsored through the Japan-America Institute of Management Science (JAIMS), will concentrate on studying Japanese business principles. Bates will pay her own way to participate in the program, which is open to all business people and students.

The JAIMS tour begins July 18 with a three-day layover in Honolulu, Hawaii. The group will then fly to Sophia University in Tokyo, Japan, where they will study business principles used by participating companies including Nissan, Seiko and Fuji.

"There are only nine Americans going," Bates said. Bates said she is enthusiastic about the tour, which reflects her interest in international marketing. It will be her first trip to Japan, as well as her first trip out of the United States.

Bates, who is 20, said she is the only single person going on the tour; other participants are traveling with husbands and wives. "I'll probably be the youngest one, too," she added.

Bates said she speaks no Japanese, but plans to learn before leaving.

Dargantes will also face a language barrier, as she also speaks no Japanese. Dargantes will attend the 39th annual Japan-America Student Conferences in July.

Each year, 40 American and 40 Japanese students participate in the conference, which includes discussions, lectures and formal receptions with government officials and business leaders. The conference is designed to promote peace through mutual understanding, friendship and trust, said Jay Harris, international exchange adviser.

This year, the conference will include tours of Tokyo, Kyoto, Nagasaki and Fukuoka, as well as a tour of a small fishing village.

Dargantes, the only Nebraskan attending the conference this year, will leave July 20 for the month-long program.

The conference alternates between countries each year, he said. It will be held in the United States next year, and Dargantes is interested in participating on the planning committee.

"It's really unique in that this year's students plan next year's conference," Harris said.

"It's a great way to make contacts. Many alumni are now active in government, business and academics."

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Fund A refund forms for the first summer session or anyone who has paid for both summer sessions will be available in the administrative offices of the Milo Bail Student Center during the week of June 22-26.

This Week

Saturday 13th

- "Beginner's Wildflower Workshop," Fontenelle Forest Nature Center, 9 a.m.
- "Family Cookout," Fontenelle Forest Nature Center, 6 p.m. Reservations required
- "Elkhorn River Canoe Trip," UNO Campus Recreation. Reservations required.

Sunday 14th

- "Colors and Shapes Hike," Fontenelle Forest Nature Center, 2 p.m.
- "Mini Nature Worlds," Fontenelle Forest Nature Center, 2 to 4 p.m. Reservations required
- "Hazardous Plants," Neale Woods Nature Center, 2 p.m.
- "Music in the Parks," Stan Yank Combo and Matt Wallace Jazz Fusion, Central Park Mall, 6:30 p.m.
- "Table Talk," Host Paul Borge and guest Dr. Richard Flynn, dean of the College of Education, KVNO 90.7 FM, 4:30 p.m.

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Entertainment columnist boards train with murderer

Omaha Police Chief Robert Wadman addressed the crowd assembled in Fremont's Ronin Park Saturday as they waited to board the Mystery/Murder Train. "As you know, filthy rich Willard Simpson died in his Omaha home yesterday. The Omaha Police Department has ascertained that Simpson was poisoned and asks for your assistance in apprehending the murderer."

"The 58-year-old Simpson was married with three sons. One son is missing, one is in the penitentiary and one works in a bank. Simpson was a prominent jet-setter who reportedly owed money to underworld figures. A notorious womanizer, Simpson allegedly was the man who discovered Donna Rice. He hated dogs and small children, never tasted quiche, drank tequila and ate the worm."

"He ate quiche in the closet!" a woman in the audience shouted. "He was a lousy human being who deserved to die!"

A woman in red disputed this statement. She claimed to have "loved and hated him."

"We should have worn a costume," Mary said, gesturing toward a woman in a pith helmet and safari suit.

"The maid costume is good," I said as I indicated a woman in a black and white uniform.

"Oh, that's wonderful. She should win the prize for best costume."

"What about the woman in red? I assume she was Simpson's mistress." The brunette wore a tight red crepe, black gloves, rhinestones and a black hat with a veil.

"Overdone," Mary said with a judicious wrinkle of her nose.

The mystery coordinator instructed the crowd of 200 to form into groups of 10 that would function as investigative agencies.

Mary and I joined two other intelligent-looking women, Jane and Janine. "We have four, we need six more!"

"There's a group of six."

"Hello."

"Hello."

"We're the Jensens. I'm Jane/Mary/Don/Joan/Patti/Jane/Janine/Julie/Alicia/Lyle/Mary/John" — the handshakes went around the circle, over and under and across.

"Just call me Dad," Don said, giving up on introductions.

"He's Dad," Julie concurred. We made him the head of our agency, the 'J' Team."

Each agency received a packet with a list of items they had to find. For every two items presented to the mystery coordinator, the group received a clue as to the identity of the murderer. The murderer could be anyone on the train.

The scavenger hunt consisted of three separate levels. When a team garnered three clues, the agency could advance to the next level of the competition. After completing the third level, each agency submitted the killer's name to the coordinator. The first team to correctly identify the killer won. Only one guess was allowed each team.

We boarded the Fremont-Elkhorn train and the mystery expedition began as the steam engine lurched forward. "The

train doesn't sway like this all the way to Hooper, does it?" Alicia asked.

"I'm afraid so," Julie said. "I took this ride last year." She borrowed a few bobby pins from Alicia to anchor down her hat.

People moved up and down the aisles asking, "Do you have a radio?" "A strawberry?" "Do you wear a size 5 shoe?" "Have a tattoo you'd care to show?"

Our group could only come up with an address book and a coupon.

Mary and I jostled along past the corn fields and mulberry trees regaling each other with stories of the journey west on hot, sooty trains.

Alicia eavesdropped on an energetic team moving along the aisle. "They're already on Level 2!" she announced.

"It's the little grey cells that count," Mary said, tapping her forehead. "Some people have to run around, others can just sit and figure it out."

Don returned from the rear car with our first clue: "The killer is wearing yellow."

"That lets out the lady in red."

"She was too obvious anyway."

"We'll just wait until we get some more clues."

Unflustered by our seeming lack of progress, Mary and I enjoyed the beautiful ride. We waved back to kids in the cars along the road, marvelled at the gardens and watched a cat and mouse disappear down a storm drain in Nickerson where the train halted to replenish the Pepsi and Diet Coke supply.

Alicia obtained two more clues by giving Chief Wadman a hard-luck story. "The killer has a hat. The killer has green eyes. That description fits you," Alicia said to Julie.

"Me? You think I'm the killer?"

"Surely, it would have to be someone from the organizing group, wouldn't it? Someone in character?" I asked.

"They said it could be anyone. One of us."

"Oh, I bet it's someone in the family. Always suspect the immediate relatives first. We don't even know who the sons are yet."

"We'll probably find out in Hooper," Janine said.

The group converged at the Iron Horse bar. Capitalizing on Hooper's historic downtown, city merchants have restored the natural brick and wood interiors of the buildings. The effect was quite charming.

"We thought your team had dropped out," the Coordinator said.

"Humph," Mary said. "We'll show them!"

Patti Dale

Gateway Columnist

We divided up the new list of items we had to find. Alicia obtained a chess piece and typewriter ribbon by knocking on a house and leaving her purse as security. I tracked down the city clerk to get an autograph of a Hooper official. Jane paid 10 cents for a 1967 nickel, and Don qualified as someone with more than six brothers and sisters. Jane and Janine hit the bars again and found a 1965 half dollar under a bottle of pear schnapps. The American Legion let us borrow a bullet.

We discussed our new clues as Joan wrote them down. "The killer does eat fast food."

"I thought that was 'does not eat fast food,'" Julie said.

"You're right. The killer has curly or wavy hair. The killer goes to a bar more than once a week. The killer has ridden the train before. The killer takes vitamin pills. Both parents of the killer are not alive. The killer has been in basic training."

A man at the table behind us turned Julie around. "What color are your eyes?" he asked. "Are you English?"

"Why? do you think I'm the killer?"

The man stared at her for a moment and returned to his group.

John asked if anyone was hungry and we decided to break for supper. The "pig roast" we expected turned out to be barbecued pork sandwiches, chips and coleslaw.

Under pressure Julie admitted she's a health food nut who does not eat fast food.

"Have you been in basic training?"

She nodded. "I'm in the Reserves. I bet a lot of people here are."

"Do you go to a bar more than once a week?"

"I work in a bar," she admitted with a shy grin.

"Five plus five plus five equals the name. That was a clue I overheard," Mary said. "what is your full name?"

"Julie Ellen Major."

"You are the killer!"

"Oh, I hope not. I don't want to be a murderer! Please don't make me the killer. Check out some of these other people first."

"She's the murderer," Joan said when Julie and John left the table.

"But both her parents are alive," Mary said. "You and Don..."

"Oh, she's not our daughter. Only Alicia is."

"But I thought..."

"No, she and John just asked if they could join us."

"She's the killer," we all agreed.

"But what if we're wrong?" someone asked.

"We'll feel awful bad if we accuse her and it's not her."

At 7:31 we turned Julie in. The team that sat behind us in the bar won by half an hour.

"She was one of us!" Mary said in astonishment. "A member of our own group. How could she have done it?"

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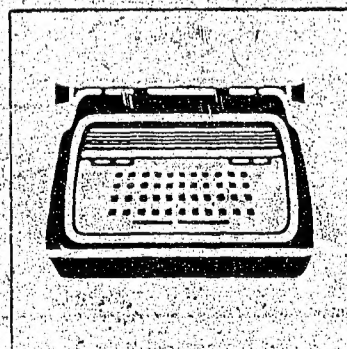
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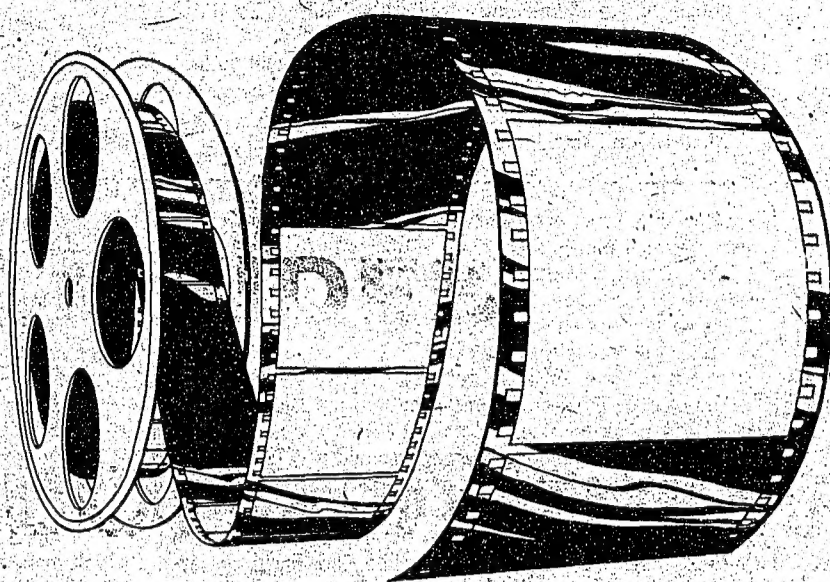
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